

**Children's Bureau  
Child and Family Services Reviews  
Promising Approaches**

**I. Identifying Information**

<b>Promising Approach:</b>	Dawn Project
<b>Agency Sponsor:</b>	Indiana Behavioral Health Choices (Choices)
<b>State:</b>	Indiana
<b>Target Population:</b>	Children ages 5–17 who have serious behavioral or emotional problems and their families
<b>Resources Required/Funding Source:</b>	Funding for the planning process came from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. In 1999, after 2 years of operation, the project received a \$7 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The project also is supported by city, county, and State funding.
<b>Length of Operation:</b>	The planning process began in 1995; the Dawn Project began working with children in 1997.

**II. Description of Promising Approach:**

	<p>In late 1995, State and local officials in Indiana formed a consortium to improve support to Marion County children and youth with serious emotional and behavioral problems. The consortium created a “system of care” for these children; the focus of the system is to engage the people closest to a child in developing and carrying out a comprehensive plan for the child.</p> <p>The local child welfare system makes referrals to the Dawn Project to work with children in foster care with special needs who the agency is trying to reunify with their parents.</p> <p>The Dawn Project is run by a local care management organization that operates on the values of the system-of-care movement. These values include strength-based, family-focused, individualized, and culturally competent care and emphasize keeping children and youth with their families and in the community whenever possible.</p>
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	<p>The project contracts for staff with the community mental health centers in Marion County; the service coordinators are employees of the centers but are housed in the project offices. These staff serve only 8–10 families at any time and help to coordinate the services provided with the other personnel working with that family, for example, the child welfare case manager. A supervisor oversees teams of five service coordinators; several case managers support the teams by providing specific services to children and families, such as supervising parent visitation</p> <p>Choices has contracted with the Indiana Consortium for Mental Health Services Research to conduct a comprehensive local and national (in conjunction with the evaluators of the Federal grant project) evaluation of the Dawn Project.</p> <p>The project currently is providing technical assistance to other Indiana communities in creating systems of care.</p>
<b>III. Contact for More Information:</b>	
	<p>Toni Mattioda Co-Director Dawn Project (317) 205-8234 &lt;<a href="http://www.kidwrap.org">www.kidwrap.org</a>&gt;</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Summary prepared November 2002</p>